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SOCIAL ECONOMY AT THE PARIS EXPOSITION.

Two aspects of the great French Exposition deserve the special attention of students of economic and social science: first, the groups of economic sections located in the Esplanade des Invalides, and known as the Exposition of Social Economy, supplemented from time to time by explanatory conferences; secondly, the "congresses," or reunions, of specialists from different parts of France and from other countries, for the study of social and economic questions. Both are in reality aspects of the same thing, though perhaps the one is of more special interest as a method of propaganda, the other as a method of research. The intimate relation of the two was recognized by the ministerial ordinance of June 9, 1887, which provided that, as a part of the "universal" exposition of 1889, there should be an exposition of social economy, composed of fifteen sections, and supplemented by the congresses and conferences already mentioned.*

Briefly, these fifteen sections, intended to facilitate the comparison and classification of results, were as follows:—

SECTION I.—REMUNERATION OF LABOR.

Forms and conditions, express or tacit, of contracts; periodicity and modes of payment; *primes*, or special allowances proportioned to quantity or quality of product, or to economy in raw materials and combustibles; agricultural contracts; remuneration in kind of farm laborers; employment of women and children in manufactories; medals, prizes, and other encouragements to industry, skill, and continued service; rate of wages and cost of living; settlement of disputes by arbitration and conciliation. In short, the best solutions given by the agricultural and other industries of different countries to the problem of "remuneration of labor," including also a special study of the legislation and jurisprudence of different countries touching the legal status of laborers, regulation and inspection of certain industries, liability of employer in case of accident.

* Subsequently organized by *arrêt ministériel du 3 août, 1887.*

SECTION II.—PROFIT SHARING, CO-OPERATIVE PRODUCTION.

Different systems adopted; distribution and employment of profits; rules and statutes; *métayage*; productive societies, composed of workmen; constitution and management; remuneration of labor, capital, and temporary employees.

SECTION III.—TRADE ORGANIZATIONS.

(a) Organizations composed of employers, of workmen, or mixed organizations of employers and employees, in agricultural as well as other industries. (b) Boards of conciliation, of arbitration, *prud'hommes*; their relations to disputes, contracts, apprenticeship. (c) Scientific and other societies for study of social and industrial questions; institutions created by such societies, inquiries, publications.

SECTION IV.—APPRENTICESHIP.

The contract; technical instruction in the workshop or in schools and courses established by patrons or by associations of workmen; schools of domestic economy [*écoles ménagères*]; societies for protection of apprentices; orphanages and establishments for children morally abandoned; courses of instruction in social and industrial economy, and practical working of institutions of *prévoyance*.

SECTION V.—MUTUAL AID SOCIETIES.

Friendly societies and *Knappschaften*, providing medicine, medical assistance, dispensaries, hospital treatment; indoor and outdoor relief; life, accident, and fire insurance; pensions in case of involuntary idleness or old age; burial funds; assistance in securing work.

SECTION VI.—BANKS OF PENSION AND LIFE ANNUITIES.

National banks of pensions for old age; different forms of pension and annuity established by the State, by employers in favor of workmen, by associations for mutual aid.

SECTION VII.—INSURANCE.

(a) Employers' liability and methods of insurance in case of accidents causing temporary or permanent incapacity or the death of employees; mutual insurance by voluntary subscriptions, by deductions from wages, or in accordance with State regulations; moral effects upon relation of workmen and employers in diminishing disputes; diminution of accidents. (b) Various systems of life insurances originating with workmen or employers; philanthropic and other societies. (c) Special forms of insurance against fire, hail, epizoötic, and other risks. (d) Statistics concerning institutions established by the State, by collective or by private enterprise, as to death-rates, accidents, losses.

SECTION VIII.—SAVINGS.

(a) National and postal savings-banks; school savings-banks; all similar institutions founded or directed by the State, provinces, departments, communes, chambers of commerce. (b) Different types of private origin; tontine societies, building societies, land societies, *Type de la Fournie*. (c) Systems of encouraging thrift, instituted by employers, either by special facilities for deposit, by advances for purchase of land or dwelling, or by acquisition of shares in the establishment.

SECTION IX.—DISTRIBUTIVE (OR CONSUMPTIVE) CO-OPERATION.

Different methods of organization and management; economic and moral results; relations to other institutions of mutual assistance, libraries and trade organizations; development of intelligence, of habits of regularity and economy; material and moral amelioration of the family; co-operative restaurants, bakeries.

SECTION X.—CO-OPERATIVE LOAN ASSOCIATIONS.

Credit in trade, manufacture, agriculture; banks of the Schulze-Delitzsch or the Raiffeisen type; agricultural associations, for the purchase of machinery, fertilizers, and seed, or for the loan of money; relations with trade organizations, with mutual aid, co-operative, and other societies; social status of members and clients; intellectual and moral results in libraries, courses of instruction, clubs, amelioration of the condition of the family; State interference, regulation, inspection, or administration.

SECTION XI.—LABORERS' DWELLINGS.

Cottages; collective dwellings for several families; construction by co-operative societies, building societies, and other associations of workmen, or by employers, in manufacturing centres; first cost, rents, methods of acquisition by part payments; moral and physical results in improved sanitary conditions; encouragement of construction by special exemptions or facilities accorded by the State or city governments; influence of fixed tenure upon family life, temperance, and thrift; illustrations by models of great institutions like the Godin *Familistère* at Guise, and by furnished cottages of natural size showing the different types and the cost of production.

SECTION XII.—WORKINGMEN'S CLUBS AND RECREATIONS.

Clubs, social, political, religious, commercial, literary, scientific, artistic; organization by workmen, by employers, or patrons; similarity or difference in social and industrial position, age and sex, of members; cost of administration, results; size and nature of libraries; sale of refreshments; temperance cafés; existence of gaming; occasional admis-

sion of families of members; debates, courses of instruction, and other distractions organized by the clubs, as boating, racing, bicycling, military drill, gymnasiums, choral and instrumental music.

SECTION XIII.—“HYGIÈNE SOCIALE.”

(a) General laws, regulations, and statutes touching protection of young children; adulteration of food, sanitary regulations as to construction and inspection of dwellings, employment of women and children in factories; security of workmen against accidents (employers' liability); salubrity of workshops and of certain trades. (b) Measures taken by State or local authorities for suppression of alcoholism; Gottenburg system; limitation of dram-shops; purity of liquors; temperance societies; asylums; total abstinence; temperance cafés. (c) *Crèches*; protection and instruction of apprentices and minors; restaurants, refectories, baths, lavatories, established for use of employees.

SECTION XIV.—INSTITUTIONS CREATED BY EMPLOYERS.

In favor of their *employees*: intended to present a collective view of the efforts of employers “to improve the material and moral condition of their co-operators, and better to establish the solidarity of the two factors of production.” The *arrière-pensée* which inspired this duplication of subjects scattered for the most part through other sections, may perhaps be inferred from the declaration of the president of the section that “this century and this country are misunderstood and calumniated by those who pretend that the workman has been the great sacrifice in the almost universal progress.” In short, there was to be a revision from a special point of view of the preceding sections.

SECTION XV.—“GRANDE ET PETITE INDUSTRIE.”

Grande et petite culture; concentration of industry in large establishments; efforts to perpetuate small workshops; displacements of domestic industries; division of the soil; intellectual, moral, and material condition under systems of large, of moderate, and of small farms; conditions of the *métayer*; relations of agriculture and manufacture; emigration and the movement of labor from the country to cities or to foreign countries. The family: receipts in money and in kind; expenses for food, clothing, recreation, and for institutions of savings and *prévoyance*.

Such, in brief, was the scope of the exhibition of social economy. Its relation to the exhibition as a whole is obvious. The exhibition is largely a study of production from the producer's point of view. From a sociological standpoint, it is an attempt to establish the relation of the material, intellectual, and moral advance of the worker to the advance in science, invention, art, and industry.

This purpose, conceived in a thoroughly scientific and comprehensive spirit, was announced with absolute clearness from the first. Alongside the great record of industrial progress was to be a parallel study of social and moral progress,—a study sufficiently exhaustive to furnish the data for scientific generalization, and sufficiently attractive, “decorative, and picturesque” to serve the purpose of popular instruction.

The difficulties besetting such an undertaking were enormous. To prepare a similar exhibition for students and economists would be simple enough. A library full of statistical reports, brochures, reading-desks, and facilities for critical research, would suffice. To plan an amusing economic exhibition for the world in general, and the world of sight-seers in particular, was quite a different thing. First of all, the administration wisely recognized that, for the most part, exposition-goers are bereft of all senses but one,—sight. Therefore, the abstractions of economic science, the beauties of profit-sharing, the blessings of sobriety and *prévoyance*, must be rendered visible. Secondly, it must be confessed that humanity in general is quite content to view the products of human labor (which are of interest) without much thought or inquiry as to the condition of the laborers: therefore, the abstraction must be so clothed as to catch the attention of the passer-by, and compel him to “stop and reflect.” Finally, the commercial advantage and the self-satisfaction attaching to a grand prize, a gold medal, and a large amount of gratuitous advertising, were too considerable to admit of accepting quite at its own valuation the results of even the most single-eyed philanthropy. Hence the necessity of a general preliminary inquiry by a central and impartial authority, to discover the institutions actually existing and furnish a basis of comparison for choosing types to be exhibited, verifying the pretensions of the more ambitious, rewarding the merit of the less pretentious, and ultimately assigning the honors destined to commend the most meritorious to public attention and imitation. The special mechanism for this work consisted of the committees of admission for each section, composed of distinguished economists and specialists, with presidents and vice-presidents nomi-

nated by the minister; the committee of organization, consisting of the presidents of the sectional committees and the director-general of "exploitation"; and, finally, the departmental committees for the local inquiries. In the autumn of 1887, the director-general submitted to these departmental committees a formidable series of questions, based upon an extremely minute and exhaustive analysis of the institutions assigned to each section, with instructions to proceed with the responsible task of soliciting information, receiving every sort of evidence offered, "no one excepted," sending forms for responses to the proper persons, and finally submitting reports to the committee of organization from which the questions emanated. In these questions and instructions, no detail which could minister to the general effectiveness, attractiveness, and good taste of the exhibition, was too trivial or insignificant. There were suggestions as to size and construction of diagrams, charts, statistical tables, photographs of men and establishments, scales of comparisons for models and charts, use of colors, choice of mottoes, busts, decorations, — in short, a thousand and one details, germane, it would seem, to decorative art rather than to economic science.

The actual seat of the exposition comprised about an acre of ground in the Esplanade des Invalides, opposite the colonial exposition. It was disposed as follows. In the midst, a so-called workingmen's club,—a hall used for conferences, capable of seating three hundred people, furnished with reading tables, bookcases, pamphlets, and documents, adorned with the insignia of various clubs, Christian associations, and the like, and marked by the absence of any considerable evidence of interest on the part of existing workingmen's organizations in France. Near by, a somewhat unique and original feature of the exhibition, several workmen's cottages, full-sized and furnished, constructed by certain societies after the type adopted for employees. To the left, two modest "pavilions" devoted to profit-sharing. One, for the merchants and manufacturers, illustrated different systems: the other, decorated with great taste, was devoted almost exclusively to the famous *Maison Leclaire*. A third pavilion was reserved for foreign exhibitors — Belgian, English, American — and for the

expositions of certain municipalities ; a fourth, for the society of *assurance urbaine*. In the foreground, a descriptive monument, illustrating the growth of co-operation in England ; also, a not too attractive "economic restaurant," as a unique feature of the Exposition as a whole, destined to be "for the crowd a serious element of attraction." Finally, to the right, an extensive gallery, some sixty metres in length by twelve in breadth, devoted to the general exhibition of the fifteen sections.

The preliminary inquiry concluded, the Committee of Organization was then in a position to distribute among the sectional committees of admission something like fourteen hundred square metres of wall-space, with a corresponding area of tables, cases, book-shelves, placed against the wall at a convenient height, and destined for the reception of documents, reports, pamphlets, for distribution, sale, or consultation. Embarrassed by the wealth of evidence placed at their disposal, compelled to resort to every possible device for increasing or utilizing available space, the committee proceeded with the delicate task of selection, notifying each exhibitor of the space at his disposal, and submitting diagrams and suggestions as to the methods already mentioned of securing enough of uniformity and enough of variety to facilitate comparison and to avoid "coldness, abstraction, and obscurity."

Just how far the exposition accomplished all these ambitious purposes, it is very difficult to say. *A priori*, it was to be feared that such an enterprise in moral economics and decorative sociology would degenerate into either a sort of international bill-board and advertising agency or an economic kindergarten. That it escaped both these extremes is perhaps tribute enough to the national ingenuity and facility in the language of symbolism. Certain it is, in any event, that the abstractions were made visible and the principles of industrial solidarity symbolized to such an extent that, if it was not possible to erect a shrine to the goddess of profit-sharing and *prévoyance*, it was still possible to study reverently the annual inscriptions of progress on the somewhat too sepulchral monument to English co-operation, to read the romance of an industrial partnership upon the daintily decorated little temples

Leclaire, to study the remarkable history of Godin's experiment by the aid of a grand model of the *Familistère* at Guise. In fine, it is no exaggeration to say that the enthusiast might easily have added a rose to the tributes which adorned the busts of Monsieur and Madame Boucicault, placed in what seemed very like a shrine to the industrial philanthropies of the *Bon Marché* and the memory of its founders.

Not that all this writing on the wall made the average Philistine "stop and reflect." On the contrary, he went his way to the Eiffel Tower or the "economic restaurant," without even yielding to the seductions which the rare luxury of comfortably upholstered benches sometimes added to the contemplation of the more arid statistics. Generally, too, he passed directly in front of the student who really wanted to see, who found the hundreds of square yards of information very hard on neck and eyes, the hundreds of books, pamphlets, and reports which were nailed to the little tables bewilderingly numerous and tantalizing, and the stream of people simply "doing" the Exposition a very great annoyance, who finally quitted the exposition of social economy profoundly impressed with his own ignorance and with the necessity of waiting till some official report should place the great mass of heterogeneous information more at his disposal. This feeling of perplexity was, perhaps, a little stimulated in rare instances by the predominance of decoration and motto over facts, in so much that sometimes,—as in the exhibit of the Knights of Labor, for example,—a generous declaration of purposes and an unfortunate neglect to tabulate detailed results lent color to the unpleasant suspicion that, in spite of all precautions, the sections had not escaped some slight exploitation in the way of gratuitous advertisement of things hoped for rather than seen. On the other hand, compared with other portions of the great Exposition, it is certain that the educational value of the sociological sections was very great. Above all, it is to be noted, as indisputable evidence upon this point, that, as a method both of instruction and of research, it has commended itself in an eminent degree to the many distinguished economists who watched and aided the progress of the exposition. So conspicuous is this interest that continuous efforts have been

made to perpetuate the exhibition in some permanent form, as a museum and repository destined both for the use of specialists in comparative research and for popular instruction. The possibility of establishing a museum of comparative sociology, thus applying to economic science the method adopted by almost every other, was foreshadowed not only in the great care taken to secure uniformity in methods but also in the hope, expressed by the presidents of certain sections, that exhibitors would generously hold themselves ready to abandon their exhibits in favor of such an enterprise.

Of the explanatory conferences given from time to time by presidents of sections, it is not necessary to speak; for, however valuable they may be as printed reports, their immediate educational effect was necessarily limited to the fortunate few who happened to be in attendance. With the congresses, however, the case is different. The public was not admitted. Composed of accredited delegates, specialists, members of scientific associations, they were essentially reunions of men and women devoted to serious work. Organized under government direction and patronage, assigned to public halls according to an official programme, they gained special significance from the exceptional opportunities which the exposition presented for such meetings of more or less distinguished specialists from different parts of France and from other countries. Unfortunately, it must be admitted that from time to time these congresses suffered not a little from the evil of availability, people whose pleasure or business took them to Paris being pressed into the service of science and philanthropy by societies whom accident or impecuniosity deprived of better representatives. On the whole, however, these congresses, which followed closely the subjects of many of the economic sections, were thoroughly dignified and impressive,—little short of an international university to the student of social and economic science privileged to follow their deliberations. They represented almost every aspect of sociological inquiry, ranging from international arbitration to bimetallism, public assistance, co-operation, and *prévoyance*. To those who have looked upon the great Exposition as an apotheosis of iron, electricity, and advertising, the existence of these congresses, no

less than of the sociological sections, cannot fail to be a gratifying testimony to the vigor with which moral and social ideals demanded recognition.

I have dwelt thus upon the details of organization because it is the method of scientific research which is of immediate significance in view of the approaching American exhibition in 1892. A similar unity of effort on the part of leading economists and specialists, of statistical, economic, and philanthropic societies, and a similar wisdom and forethought in early organization and in systematic study of details, would insure for the United States — nay, for the continent, probably — a concentrated view of individual and associated attempts to solve industrial problems, which would be of incalculable value both to the practical and to the theoretical student. Fortunately, much of the necessary mechanism already exists in the national and State bureaus of labor statistics. True, the possibilities of an international consensus of opinion evoked by congresses similar to those already mentioned may be somewhat modified by the fact that, for practical purposes, the distance from Europe to New York is greater than the distance from New York to Europe. Still, the absence of foreign delegates could, in a measure, be compensated by special studies based upon the results of investigations already made in other countries,—a compensation worthy of serious consideration, if the foreign delegates should find as much difficulty in speaking English as the average English-speaking delegate seems to find in speaking French. Whether a national museum of social economy would result is perhaps of less importance; but, even without the example of the French exhibition to follow, it would be not only a matter of profound regret, but an evil omen as a sign of the times, if at the eleventh hour of the nineteenth century an exposition dedicated to a hundred years of progress forgot to give pre-eminent importance to a study of the urgent social questions upon which the verdict of future success or failure will surely depend.

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